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Action Plan – SMALL DIGITAL

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1 Introduction

1.1 About the Action Plans

Welcome to the LETZ RETAIL ONLINE Action Plans, designed to empower small businesses in the retail, commerce, hospitality, and cultural/creative sectors, as well as small businesses, start-ups, and entrepreneurs in the digital and ICT sector. Our aim is to provide you with the knowledge, skills, and competences to co-create, co-design, and collaborate on digital transformation initiatives. Through these action plans, we seek to enhance a strategic and systemic approach to collaboration across the small commerce and small digital sectors.

The LETZ RETAIL ONLINE Action Plans have a twofold objective: to assist small businesses in designing, implementing, and collaborating in their digital transformation journey, and to guide business hubs in facilitating co-creation, co-design, and collaboration within the LETZ RETAIL ONLINE sectors. The ultimate goal is to foster a thriving ecosystem where small commerce businesses can effectively go online, using the opportunities presented by digital commerce.

1.2 Approach

To achieve our goals, we adopt a comprehensive approach that addresses both the "soft" and "hard" skills necessary for successful digital transformation. The "soft" skills encompass breaking down cross-sectoral barriers, promoting effective communication, and building multi-disciplinary teams across sectors. On the other hand, the "hard" skills focus on the specific digital transformation requirements of small businesses in retail, commerce, hospitality, and cultural/creative sectors, as well as the role of the digital sector in supporting this transformation.

1.3 Action Plan Objectives

We present three distinct action plans to cater to the unique needs of small businesses in the commerce and digital sector, and business hubs:

1. **Small Commerce Action Plan:** This action plan aims to guide small commerce businesses in their digital transformation journey. It provides a step-by-step approach, with exercises, checklists, self-reflective questions, and assignments for each stage: Ideation, Preparation, Implementation, and Evaluation & Closing.
2. **Small Digital Action Plan:** This action plan is tailored for small digital businesses, empowering them to collaborate effectively with small commerce businesses. It offers similar exercises, checklists, self-reflective questions, and assignments for each stage to foster co-creation and co-design initiatives.
3. **Business Hubs Action Plan:** Specifically designed for business associations, intermediaries, and hubs, this action plan outlines the steps to start and guide the co-creation and collaboration process between small commerce and small digital sectors. It provides self-reflective questions, to-do lists, and complementary guidelines for each stage.

1.4 Expected Outcomes

By engaging with these action plans, small businesses and business hubs can expect the following outcomes:

- Enhanced understanding of the benefits and opportunities of digital transformation.
- Improved capacity to co-create, co-design, and collaborate across sectors.
- Increased knowledge and skills to navigate the digital landscape effectively.





- Strengthened relationships and partnerships between small commerce and small digital sectors.
- Successful implementation of digital transformation initiatives.
- Increased competitiveness in the digital marketplace.

These action plans are tailored for small commerce businesses that have yet to go digital and small digital businesses that are looking to collaborate with the small commerce sector. Throughout the action plans, we will supply clear instructions, practical exercises, and guidance to facilitate your journey towards digital transformation.

Let us embark on this exciting and transformative journey together, unlocking the potential of the digital world for your business.





2 Small Digital Action Plan

Welcome to the Small Digital Action Plan, an integral part of the LETZ RETAIL ONLINE Action Plans. Designed specifically for small digital businesses, startups, and entrepreneurs in the digital and ICT sector, our intention is to empower you with the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to collaborate effectively with businesses in the small commerce sector.

As we navigate through this digital transformation journey together, our goal is to break down cross-sectoral barriers and foster co-creation, co-design, and collaboration initiatives. By utilizing this plan, you are better equipped to understand and navigate the digital landscape, forging stronger relationships and partnerships within the small commerce sector.

The Small Digital Action Plan provides practical exercises, self-reflective questions, checklists, and assignments at each stage to enrich your understanding of digital transformation. This approach aims to enhance your business's competitive edge in the digital marketplace and contribute to a thriving ecosystem where digital and commerce businesses coexist and thrive.

As you engage with this action plan, expect to gain a profound understanding of the benefits and opportunities that digital transformation can bring to your business. Remember, this journey is a continuous process of learning, adapting, and growing. So, let's embark on this exciting journey, unlocking the true potential of the digital world for your business.

2.1 Ideation

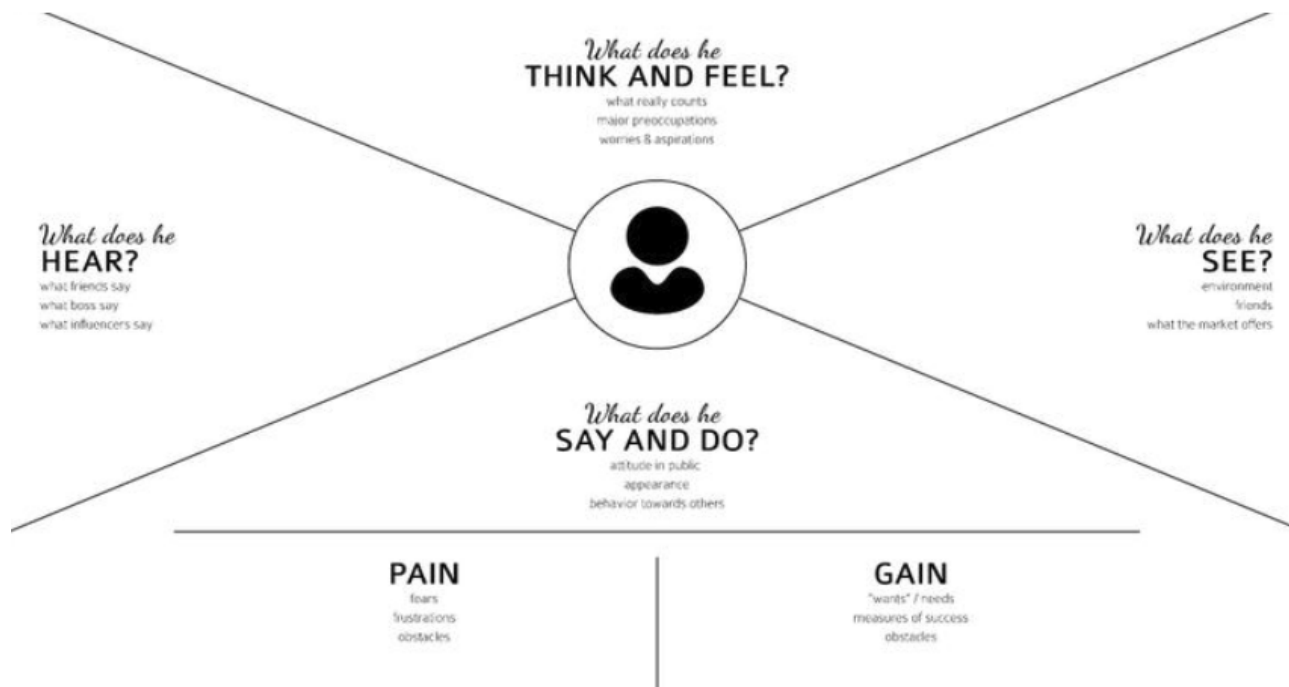
Let's embark on the Ideation phase for your small digital business, and how you can ideate and develop specific products for the Small Commerce sector, in particular through co-creation and co-design processes.

2.1.1 Exercise I

Think about the Small Commerce sector, and analyze your current product or service offer, think about ways you could adapt this offer specifically for this sector, or even for its subsectors. Read the “Personas” to understand the person behind the business and use the Empathy Map below to reflect what your typical client or user, thinks, feels, hears, says, and does. It describes their perceptions and emotions in relation to your product or service.

Using the personas, you can create the empathy map for each and find out how they would feel about your product and service, and finetune it even better to their needs.





If you want to know more about the use of the Empathy Map

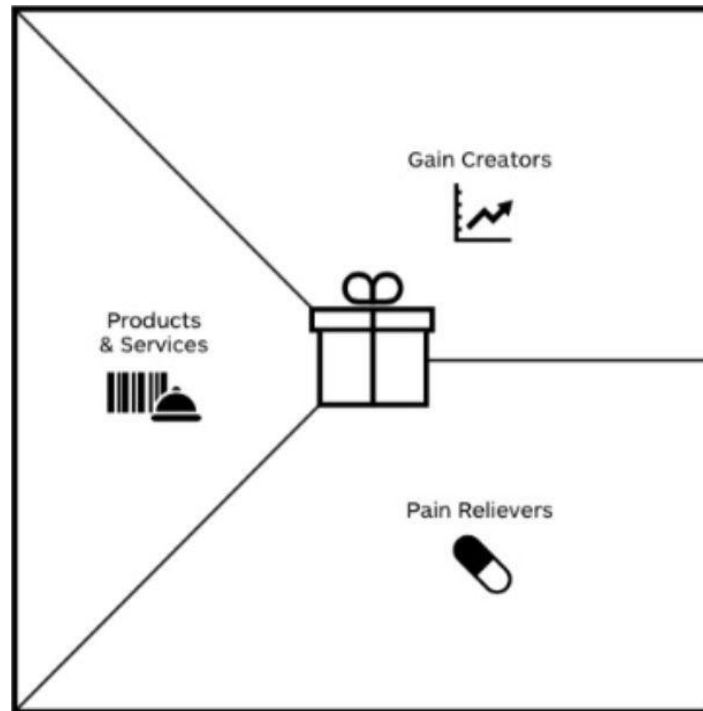
- <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/empathy-mapping/>
- <https://youtu.be/QwF9a56WFWA>
- <https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/empathy-map-why-and-how-to-use-it>

2.1.2 Exercise II

Based upon the reflections on your client of Exercise 1, put yourself in their shoes and think about the way you could support the improvement of their business processes through the use of digital tools and technologies. What can you offer them that covers their needs, i.e. that solves their pain points and provides them with an advantage over their competitors (gains).

A good tool to use is the Value Map, as it describes the features of a specific value proposition in a more structured and detailed way breaking it down into products and services, gain creators, and pain relievers.





Here is a video on how to use the map: <https://youtu.be/ReM1uqmVfP0>

2.1.3 Self-Reflective Questions

1. Are you addressing a specific subsector of the Small Commerce sector, and if so are there any specific characteristics of this subsector you need to bear in mind when starting the collaboration process?
2. Think about the barriers and challenges you think you might face when collaborating with a Small Commerce business and in particular when you engage in a co-creation and co-design process (which goes beyond the mere implementation of an off the shelf product). What barriers or challenges can you foresee in this collaborative process?
3. What can you do to overcome these barriers, what concrete action can you take to reduce the fear and resistance of all involved in the implementation and impact of the digital tools and technologies on the business and the jobs of those working in it?
4. What opportunities and benefits do see for the co-creation and co-design processes, i.e. how can it benefit your own products and services and their development and growth into the future?



2.1.4 Checklist

Checklist Implementation	N/A	Done	Comments
Decide whether you want to focus on a product or service for the complete Small Commerce sector or focus on one of the (sub)sectors.			
Research the Small Commerce sector, or subsector and find experiences that you could learn from.			
Get a clear picture of the potential customer and the value you can offer them.			
Identify potential small commerce businesses for collaboration			
Define the goals and expected outcomes of the collaboration.			
Understand potential barriers and devise solutions			
Establish clear communication channels within your team and with potential partners			
Identify potential small commerce partners & dialogue to select the one you feel aligns most with your needs and business.			
Initiate a co-creation and co-design process with your Small Commerce partners (in particular when developing a custom solution).			
Understand the legal and security implications of such collaboration			
Plan how to maintain regular business operations of the Small Commerce business during the collaboration process			

When you finish this stage, you've laid out the foundation for going digital, and start with the actual preparation for making this a reality.

2.1.5 Inspiration for further development

[Using the LETZ RETAIL ONLINE case studies as a starting point, we have “ideated” some possible next steps for 2 of these cases, which can serve as inspiration when reflecting upon the ideation phase.](#)





2.2 Preparation

Now it's time to transition from ideas to action with the Preparation stage. Imagine this phase as a research project. It involves meticulous planning, allocating resources, and defining key milestones. Consider the necessary steps, technologies, and team members required to execute your digital strategy effectively.

2.2.1 Exercise

Identify tasks needed to facilitate collaboration.

Task	Responsible Person	Deadline	Expected Outcome/ Result	Status

2.2.2 Self-Reflective Questions

1. How will you ensure smooth collaboration and communication with small commerce businesses?
2. What is your strategy for addressing potential challenges during the collaboration process?
3. How can your digital business adapt to meet the needs of small commerce businesses effectively?
4. What key roles and responsibilities will your team have in this collaboration process?

2.2.3 Checklist

Checklist Implementation	N/A	Done	Comments
Develop a detailed plan for the collaboration			
Organize your team members and assign tasks based on skills and competences			





Establish clear communication channels with small commerce businesses

Develop strategies for managing regular business operations during the collaboration

Set key performance indicators (KPIs) for the collaboration process

Secure necessary resources and tools for the collaboration

Establish a contingency plan in case of major obstacles or setbacks

Regularly update stakeholders on the progress

Upon completion of this stage, you will have a well-structured plan, ready to be put into motion. This comprehensive preparation sets the stage for a successful digital transformation.

2.2.4 Inspiration for further development

Using the LETZ RETAIL ONLINE case studies as a starting point, we have “ideated” some possible next steps for 2 of these cases, which can serve as inspiration when reflecting upon the ideation phase.

2.3 Implementation

Welcome to the Implementation stage, where you breathe life into your digital strategy. Much like conducting an experiment, this phase involves executing your plan, integrating innovative technologies, and adapting your business operations to the digital landscape. Be prepared for challenges along the way and remain resilient in the face of change.

2.3.1 Exercise: Monitor progress

As the tasks have been divided and the planning and key milestones have been decided, it is time to monitor the steps you decided on or that are appointed to you. It is recommended to check and monitor progress on a regular basis, both during progress meetings and for yourself. This will help you to keep an overview of your responsibilities, and thus also know when to ask for support or feedback.

You can use the table below to fill in the tasks that fall under your responsibility and fill the table on a regular basis to keep up to date with your progress within the collaboration.





Task	Initial Status	Current Status	On Track	Changes made

2.3.2 Self-Reflective Questions

1. Are you on track with the collaboration timeline?
2. What challenges have you faced, and how did you overcome them?
3. How has the collaboration affected your business operations so far?
4. How well is your team adapting to the collaboration process?

2.3.3 Checklist

When you check the progress of the collaboration and your responsibilities, it also might be helpful to grab this checklist. The checklist can be used as a guideline to guarantee that no essential aspects of the implementation phase are overlooked. The list provides some crucial steps and elements that need to be addressed in this part of your collaboration.

Carefully review each item on the list and indicate whether the item is completed (“Done”), or whether it is not applicable (“N/A”). Additionally, you can add any necessary comments, for example, that you are planning to hold weekly progress meetings and that those meetings have gone according to plan, or that you missed one or two and why.

Checklist Implementation	N/A	Done	Comments
Hold regular progress meetings			
Address challenges promptly and seek solutions			
Maintain regular business operations and customer relationships			
Regularly update the collaboration plan based on the progress			
Provide ongoing training and support to team members			





Keep stakeholders informed about the progress

Review KPIs and adjust the plan if necessary

Ensure the collaboration stays within budget

Continually assess the effectiveness of the collaboration

Foster a cheerful outlook towards change within the team

Upon completing this stage, your small digital business will have successfully transitioned into the online realm, poised to thrive in the digital marketplace.

2.3.4 Inspiration for further development

[Using the LETZ RETAIL ONLINE case studies as a starting point, we have “ideated” some possible next steps for 2 of these cases, which can serve as inspiration when reflecting upon the ideation phase.](#)

2.3.5 Relevant resources

To enhance your understanding of this Action Plan and apply the skills and knowledge acquired, consider exploring the following resources:

Tutorials and How To:

- [How to Improve Kick-off Meetings to Spark Collaboration | Mainmatter](#)
- [Setting Clear Expectations - YouTube](#)
- [Monitoring and reporting | How do you keep your projects on track? - YouTube](#)

Articles and Examples:

- [How do you align your goals and expectations with your collaborators before starting a project? \(linkedin.com\)](#)
- [5 Common Collaboration Problems and How To Manage Them | Indeed.com](#)
- [Better Ways to Monitor and Communicate Your Project's Progress | Lucidchart Blog](#)





2.4 Evaluation & Closing

As we transition into the Evaluation & Closing stage of the Small Digital Action Plan, it's a prime opportunity for a deep-dive review of your collaborations and co-creations with small commerce businesses. This key stage is your chance to critically analyze outcomes, extract actionable insights, and shape strategies for future enhancement.

We'll be utilizing a systematic approach to thoroughly evaluate your digital collaboration journey. Through a diligent assessment of your co-creation results, you can identify successful tactics, highlight areas needing improvement, and spot opportunities for progression.

Through this evaluation process, you'll uncover the true impact of your collaborations, measure the success of your methods, and spot potential areas of growth. View this stage as a moment to celebrate successes, address challenges, and seek continuous improvements in your digital collaboration practices.

By following this evaluation approach, you'll be well-positioned to make educated decisions, fine-tune your collaboration processes, and strengthen ties with small commerce businesses. Embrace this reflective phase that will empower you to refine your digital collaboration strategy and deliver increased value to partners and customers.

2.4.1 Exercise: Evaluate Results

As we embark on the evaluation process, our tool of choice will be a well-structured evaluation table. This table breaks down the varied elements of your digital collaboration journey, offering you a full view of your progression. Your role involves a thoughtful examination of each of these elements and selecting the option that most accurately portrays the current standing of your small digital business.

Pay close attention to the guidance provided for each category in the table below. Your task is to select the option that most fittingly describes your business's current condition for each evaluation aspect. For now, leave the "Improvement Areas" column empty - we'll delve into this in the forthcoming self-reflective questions.

Evaluation Aspect	Initial Status	Mid-Term Status	Final Status	Improvement Areas
Measure the effectiveness of collaborative efforts with small commerce businesses	Not Started	In Progress	Successfully Completed	
Assess the impact on small commerce businesses' digital transformation	Negative	Neutral	Positive	
Analyze feedback from small commerce businesses on the co-creation process	Limited or Negative	Mixed or Neutral	Positive and Satisfactory	
Reflect on the effectiveness of cross-sector communication and collaboration	Ineffective or Challenging	Moderate or Developing	or Cohesive and Productive	





Evaluate the quality of co-created solutions and customized digital offerings	Inadequate	Acceptable	Excellent
Identify the impact on business growth and market competitiveness	Stagnant or Declining	Stable or Incremental	Enhanced and Competitive

2.4.2 Checklist

Once you have finished the evaluation exercise, we will transition to the checklist phase. This all-inclusive list serves as a valuable tool to guarantee that no crucial aspects are inadvertently overlooked during your evaluation process. It provides a systematic framework for reviewing and addressing all necessary elements.

Carefully review each item on the checklist and indicate its status as "Done" if it has been completed, "To be Done" if it still requires attention, or "Not Applicable" (NA) if it does not apply to your specific circumstances. Additionally, it is beneficial to establish deadlines for pending tasks. This will help you maintain a clear overview of your progress and ensure that you stay on track throughout the evaluation process.

Evaluation Aspect	NA	Done	To be Done
Measure the effectiveness of collaborative efforts with small commerce businesses			
Review the impact of collaborative efforts on small commerce businesses' digital transformation			
Analyze feedback from small commerce businesses on the co-creation process			
Reflect on the effectiveness of cross-sector communication and collaboration			
Evaluate the quality of co-created solutions and customized digital offerings			
Measure the impact on business growth and market competitiveness			
Assess the scalability and sustainability of collaborative initiatives			
Identify areas for improvement in the co-creation and collaboration process			
Review the level of stakeholder engagement and satisfaction			
Evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of resource allocation			
Plan for future enhancements and adaptations in your collaborative efforts			





By meticulously working through this checklist, you ensure that no crucial aspects of your collaborative initiatives go unnoticed. This rigorous approach allows for a thorough evaluation that leaves no room for oversight or missed opportunities. It ensures that every essential element is carefully examined and addressed, providing a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of your collaborative efforts. Through this process, you can identify areas of success to celebrate and areas that require further attention and improvement. Embracing this comprehensive evaluation empowers you with valuable insights to refine your strategies, enhance collaboration, and drive greater success in future endeavors.

2.4.3 Self-Reflective Questions

We have now arrived at a crucial juncture in the evaluation process, prompting you to embark on a journey of self-reflection. Here, we present you with a set of thought-provoking questions designed to delve deeper into the essence of your digital collaboration with the small commerce businesses. Engaging in this exercise requires a state of mindful contemplation and a genuine willingness to provide meaningful responses.

The underlying purpose of these questions is twofold. Firstly, they provide a platform for introspection, enabling you to gain a deeper understanding of your journey and the pivotal choices that have shaped it. Secondly, the insights derived from this introspective exercise will play a pivotal role in formulating your future strategies and direction.

Each question holds significant importance and deserves your deliberate consideration. Allow yourself the freedom to delve into the depths of your thoughts and experiences, exploring them without limitations. Avoid rushing through this process; instead, allocate sufficient time to grasp the intricate layers of your digital collaboration with the small commerce businesses.

This introspective exercise serves as a precious opportunity for learning and growth. It serves as a catalyst, propelling your future development and decision-making processes. As you engage in reflection, remember to acknowledge, and appreciate both the milestones you have achieved and the challenges you have faced, recognizing their profound impact on the ongoing journey of your business organization.

1. Did your collaborative efforts effectively contribute to the digital transformation of small commerce businesses? If not, what factors hindered your progress?
2. How has the co-creation process impacted the development of customized digital solutions for small commerce businesses?
3. What aspects of cross-sector communication and collaboration proved to be effective? Were there any challenges in this process?
4. Based on your experience, what would you do differently in future collaborative initiatives with small commerce businesses? How can you further enhance the value of your services?

Prepare to embark on a meaningful self-reflection as we complete the evaluation and closing stage of your collaborative journey with small commerce businesses. Through this introspection, you will gain valuable insights that will shape your future strategies and foster continuous growth.

By engaging in this self-reflection process, you will acquire a comprehensive understanding of the outcomes and impact of your collaborative initiatives. This understanding will enable you to refine your strategies, enhance your services, and adapt to the evolving needs of your collaborative partners.





This transformative stage serves as a pivotal moment to reflect on your collaborative efforts. Take a moment to evaluate the effectiveness of your communication, the quality of co-created solutions, and the impact on business growth. Identify areas where improvements can be made and consider how you can leverage your learnings to drive future success.

The insights gained from your self-reflection will act as a compass, guiding you towards informed decision-making and positive changes in your collaborative endeavors. Embrace this opportunity to envision the future of your collaborative efforts, integrating the lessons learned to foster ongoing growth and innovation.

As you navigate this journey of self-reflection, envision a future where your collaborative partnerships with small commerce businesses thrive. Embrace the power of adaptation, continuous improvement, and open-mindedness to stay at the forefront of the ever-changing digital landscape. Let this evaluation and closing stage be the foundation for further growth, success, and meaningful collaboration with small commerce businesses.

N.B. while the Evaluation & Closing section may differ for each action plan, the systematic approach outlined in the other sections remains consistent. This approach aims to foster effective collaborations, empower small businesses, and facilitate their transition into the digital sphere.

2.4.4 Inspiration for further development

[Using the LETZ RETAIL ONLINE case studies as a starting point, we have “ideated” some possible next steps for 2 of these cases, which can serve as inspiration when reflecting upon the ideation phase.](#)

2.4.5 Relevant resources

To enhance your understanding of this Action Plan and apply the skills and knowledge acquired, consider exploring the following resources:

Tutorials and How To:

- [Top 5 Project Management Tools for Google Workspace Users](#)
- [How To Build Successful Retail Partnerships: A Step-by-Step Guide](#)
- [Project Management – Monitoring and evaluation](#)
- [Best Practices for Transforming Digital Collaboration](#)
- [How to develop a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework | with COACH ALEXANDER](#)

Articles and Examples:

- [Creating a Culture of Continuous Improvement](#)
- [A simple and collaborative approach to digital transformation](#)
- [4 successful digital transformation case studies for businesses to learn from](#)
- [Small Business Use of Internet Marketing: Findings from Case Studies](#)





By thoroughly engaging with these resources, you have the opportunity to broaden your knowledge and strengthen your skills, thus enhancing your ability to adeptly execute the Evaluation & Closing stage of the Action Plan. This expertise not only benefits your current endeavors but also bolsters the success of future collaborations. Armed with this foundational knowledge, both Small Commerce and Small Digital sectors will be better positioned to work in synergy, adapt swiftly to industry changes, and drive their businesses towards exponential growth and success.

